CHANT DE GUERRE.

Composé par

L. M. GOTTSCHALK.

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N. R. Espadero.

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PREFATORY REMARKS,

BY AN ARTIST FRIEND OF THE GREAT COMPOSER.

I offer to the public the posthumous works of the Pianist-composer, Louis Moreau Gottschalk.

I owe the rare good fortune of possessing them to a friendship extending through eighteen years, including the period of the beginning, the increase, and the summit of his fame.

In the year 1860, troubled with a strange presentiment, and believing that his career, so brilliant, would ere long come to a close, he gave it in charge to me to do for him what our friend, Jules Fontana, has done for Chopin.

To-day I endeavor to execute the trust. The family of the deceased master expected it, and in giving these as yet unknown works to the public, I am doing simply what the master himself would have done, had not his prophetic forebodings been so soon realized. He was but forty years of age at the time of his death.

There are certain words which the pen hesitates to inscribe. How shall we characterize the works of Gottschalk? If we say he was an "Artiste de Génie," the term is vague. It seems more proper to accord to him the higher possession of Inspiration, for certainly there was such perfect grace, such supreme emotion, such expression; there were such ingeniously constructed, novel and beautiful rhythmical forms in his compositions, that we cannot deny to him the faculty which characterized both the virtuoso and the composer.

Gottschalk in his twentieth year already had won the applause of Europe. He produced in Paris a sensation. His future seemed full of promise. Berlioz, among others, vouched for the genuineness of his genius, and was among the most decided in his praise. Europe saw the unfolding of that talent. America, his native land, enjoyed the fullness of his fame. But had his more brilliant days been passed in the old world, this new constellation would there, doubtless, have been among the brightest of the stars.

As a pianist, never have I heard artist's hand bring from the docile keys of the piano such brilliant, sparkling, splendid harmonies. Then what lightness! what warmth! what éclat! what originality! After the crash and brightness of the great chords, what charming simplicity in caprice! what delicate grace! what tenderness! Two distinct individualities seemed to dwell in the same nerve-system. His execution was marvellous; but while he overcame all difficulties with ease, there was no pretence of show, and no exhibition of finger-gymnastics.

As a composer, his form is pure, correct and full of thought. His fertility of invention was wonderful. Often have I *seen* (so intense was the presentation to my interior vision) delicious morceaux, full of grace, and of perfect shape, leap from the instrument at his bidding — never again, alas! to be heard or seen! Gottschalk, at such moments, reminded me of those Hungarian ladies, who, in the enthusiasm of dancing, scattered and destroyed valuable clusters of pearls and jewels negligently attached to their chevalure.

As virtuoso, Gottschalk united, in a high degree, classical, traditional culture with progress. Possessing great resources, he did not hesitate to introduce innovations, and has been bolder in this respect than most great masters of his instrument, even in their own fields of effort; his ingenuity suggested new ways of attacking notes, of intensifying effects, of using the pedals. He may, indeed, be said to be a reformer of the "piano touch."

His method of thought, the manner in which his compositions were produced, was perhaps better known to the writer than to any other, for none surely had with him such free interchange of artistic sympathies.

The ruling force in the compositions of Gottschalk was a poetic sentiment, elevated to its purest height, and embodying a grace somewhat mournful, a penetrating sensibility, and a passionate tenderness, qualities which did not seem to be at all in the way of force, grandeur, amplitude of "invention," of majestic movement. In elective affinity he was, doubtless, nearer to Chopin than any other artist. Gottschalk was always equal to the occasion. He preferred, like the poets, to remain in sweet valleys; but like them, in sudden impulses, soared to the highest summits. Always self-possessed, he held a serene control of his fancies, even those that seemed eccentric and audacious.

Owing to a feverish activity, his numerous journeys and concerts, many of his compositions have never been committed to paper. Indeed the published pieces are but as a shadow of his entire creations. It was necessary to persuade him. It was at the solicitation of the writer he consented to have published "Apotheose," "Polonia," "Printemps d'Amour," "Chant du Soldat," "Il Sospiro," "Minuet á Seville," and others.

It needed even reproaches, and the full influence of our friendship, to cause him to give to the world, among others, "Mazeppa," dedicated to Liszt, for whom he had an enthusiastic admiration. "Mazeppa" has immense beauty, and is full of ingenious mechanism, but requires an able interpreter.

We may add, that it was much by our advice that he undertook to express in music the "sentiment" of the circumstances in which, at various times, he found himself placed. Among such compositions we find one pervaded by a tear-like quality; another seems a voluptuous dream; a third might have been written in the dark, damp, unwholesome depths of a tropical forest; and a fourth suggests a heart troubled with a sublime oppression, a grief which cannot be defined.

Gottschalk's hand sometimes held a golden lyre—sometimes he chanted wild bacchanal lays. He did not shun grotesqueness and barbarism but discovered a certain poesy in them, and so composed "Bamboula," "Romanier," "Banjo," "Ojos Creoles," "Marche de Gibaros," "Souvenir d'Andalousie," "Chanson de Gitana," etc., etc. It is sufficient to say, in passing, that all these pieces are impressed with a certain poetry and sentiment, which it would be very difficult for another composer to imitate or equal.

It will be proper, before closing, to call attention to the four-hand works, published with the others. Their beauty of form, their novel arrangement, grandeur, and "majesterial" character, render it worth while for pianists to study them carefully and analytically.

The public, eventually, will determine whether Gottschalk shall have enduring fame. Critics of the highest authority in art have already pronounced in his favor. This judgment, rendered before his talent had attained its full growth, may cause what has here been recorded to seem of little weight, but it will not be denied, even to one of the second or third rank, to render homage where admiration was so well deserved.

Besides, as one specially honored with the artistic friendship of a master of his art, it could not but be becoming to render additional tribute to his memory, and to endeavor to win for one who fills our happiest memories, a still larger share of the sympathies of the musical world.

This effort, we believe, should inspire both regret and pleasure Regret, that a talent so admirable should so soon be arrested. Pleasure, that the works of the best period of his life are before us. We enjoy the first fruits of his inspirations. We see the bright flowers of the summer time of his manhood.

N. R. ESPADERO.

June 20, 1872. *(de la Havane).*

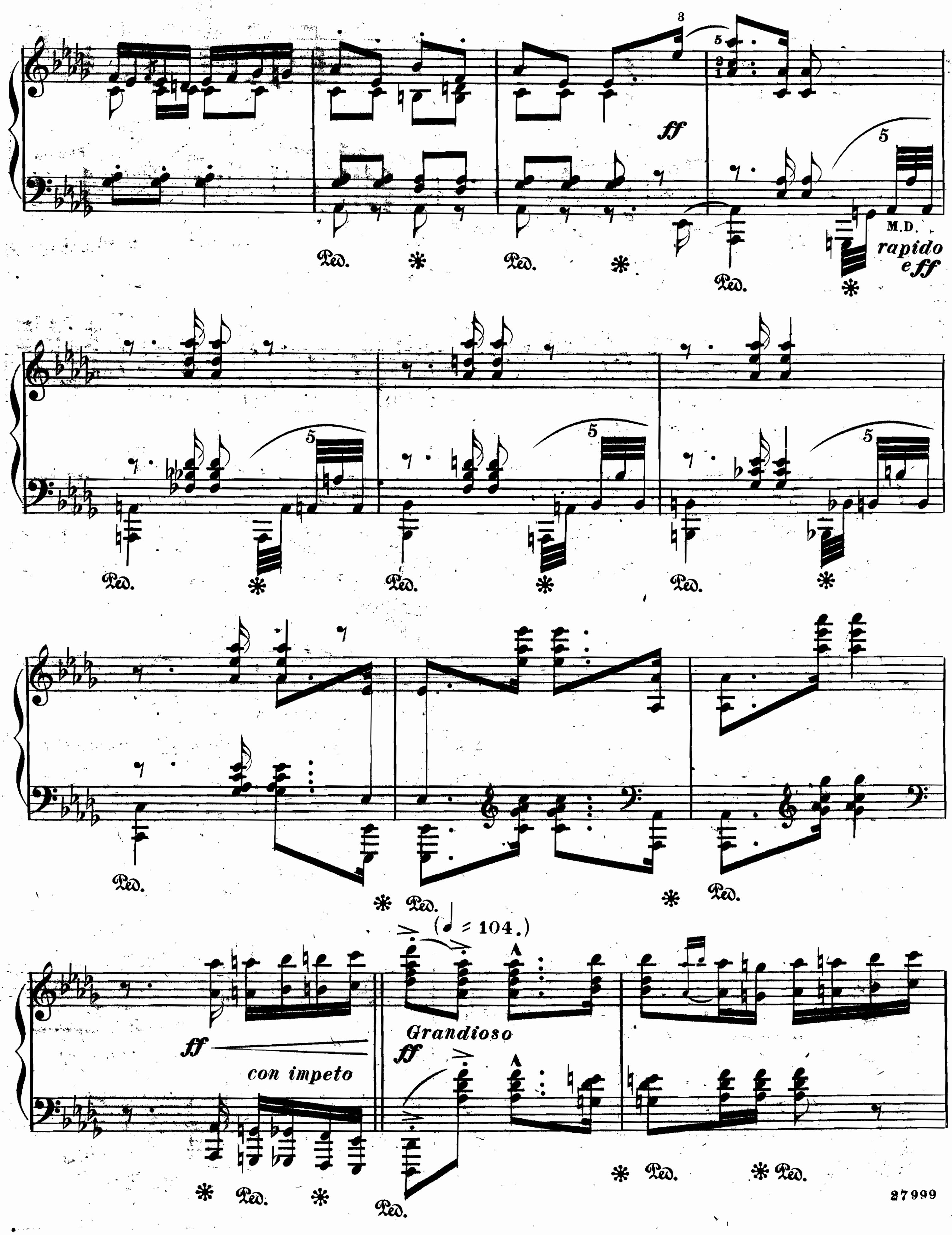
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Oeuvres Posthumes. 1859.

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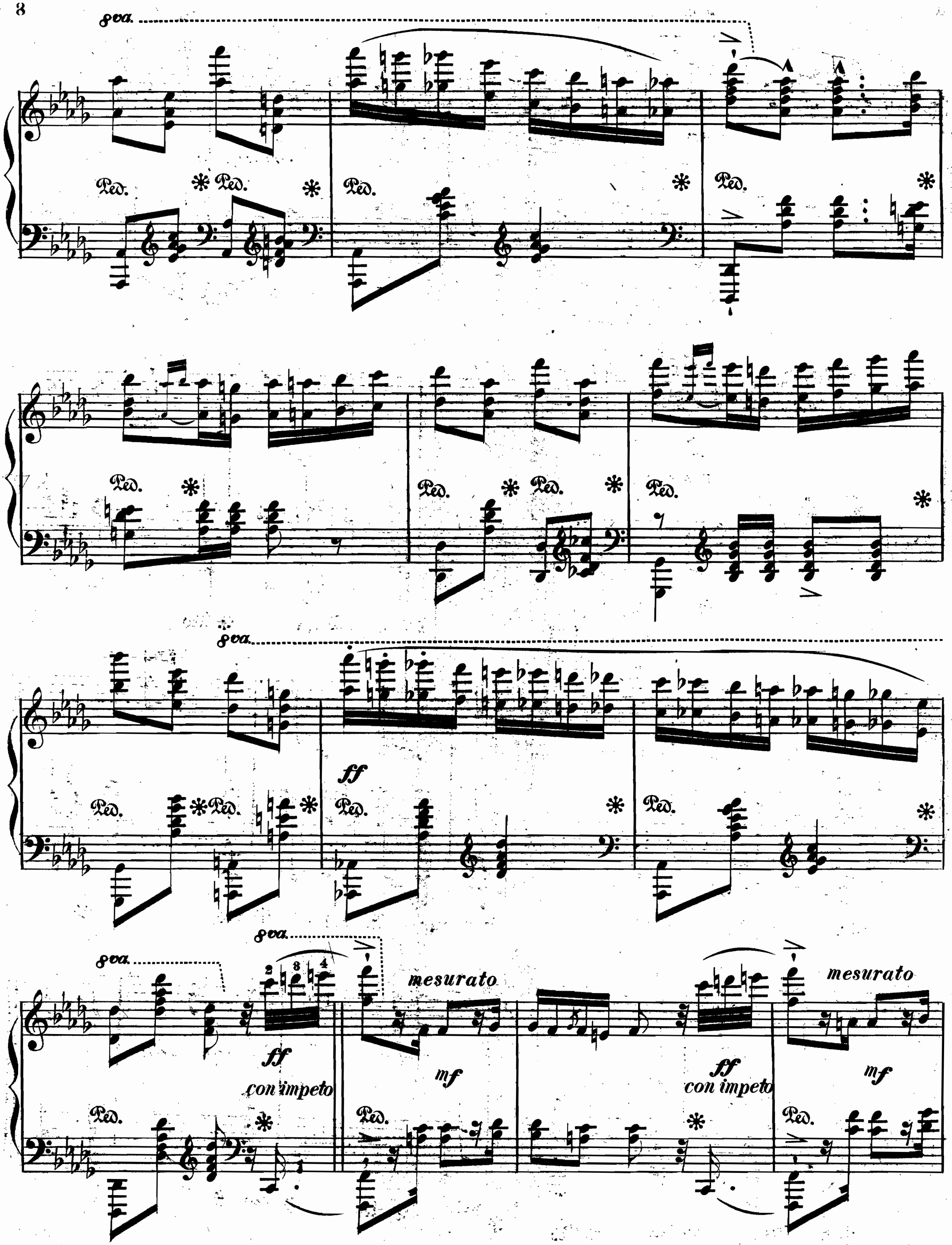


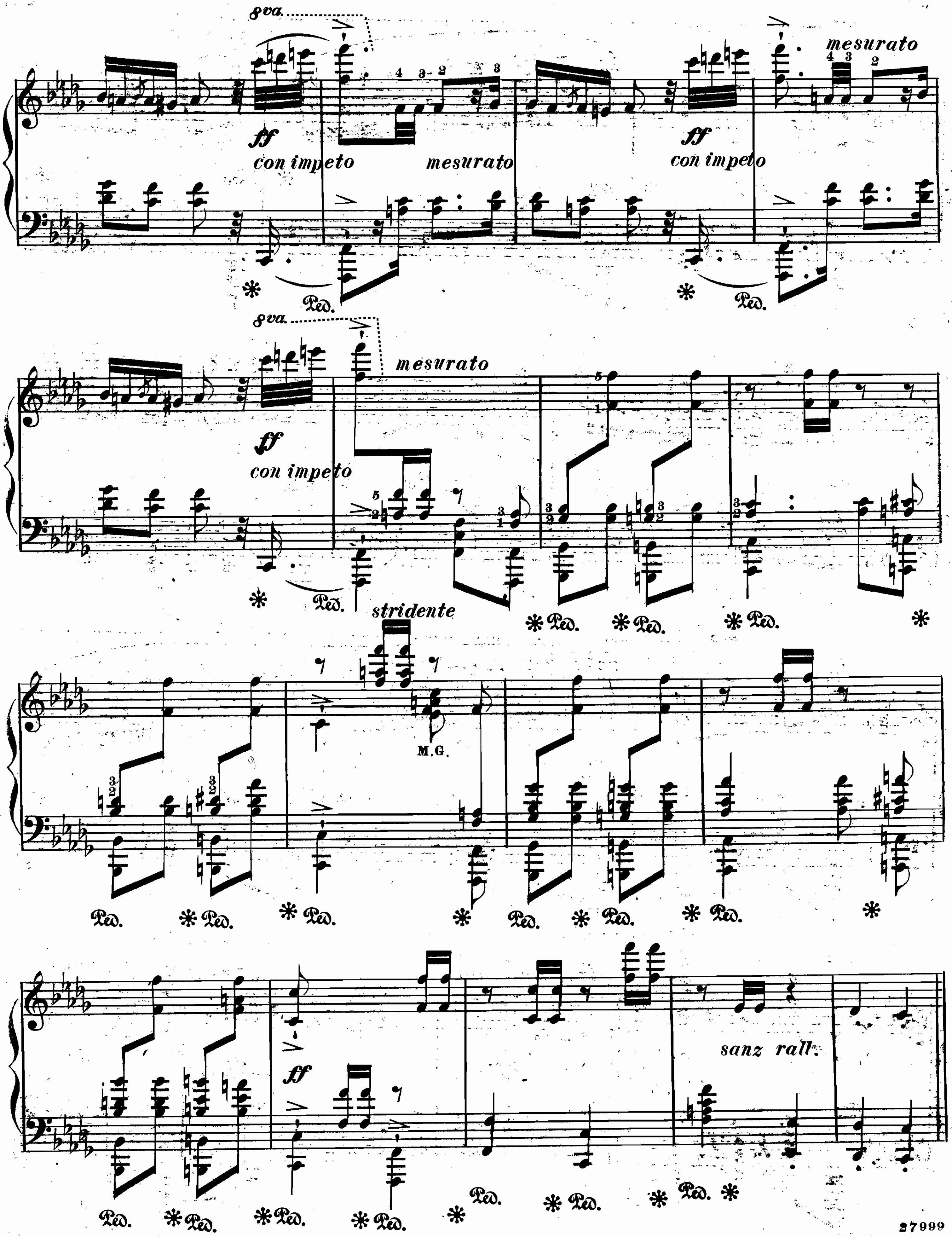

ff
cres.
con
furia
(♩ = 112.)
fff
ff
subito p e sempre deciso
ff e con impeto
subito mf
Ped.


ff
Ped.
M.D.
rapido
e ff
(♩ = 104.)
ff
con impeto
Grandioso
ff


Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.
8va
Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.
8va
Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.
8va
Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped. Ped.

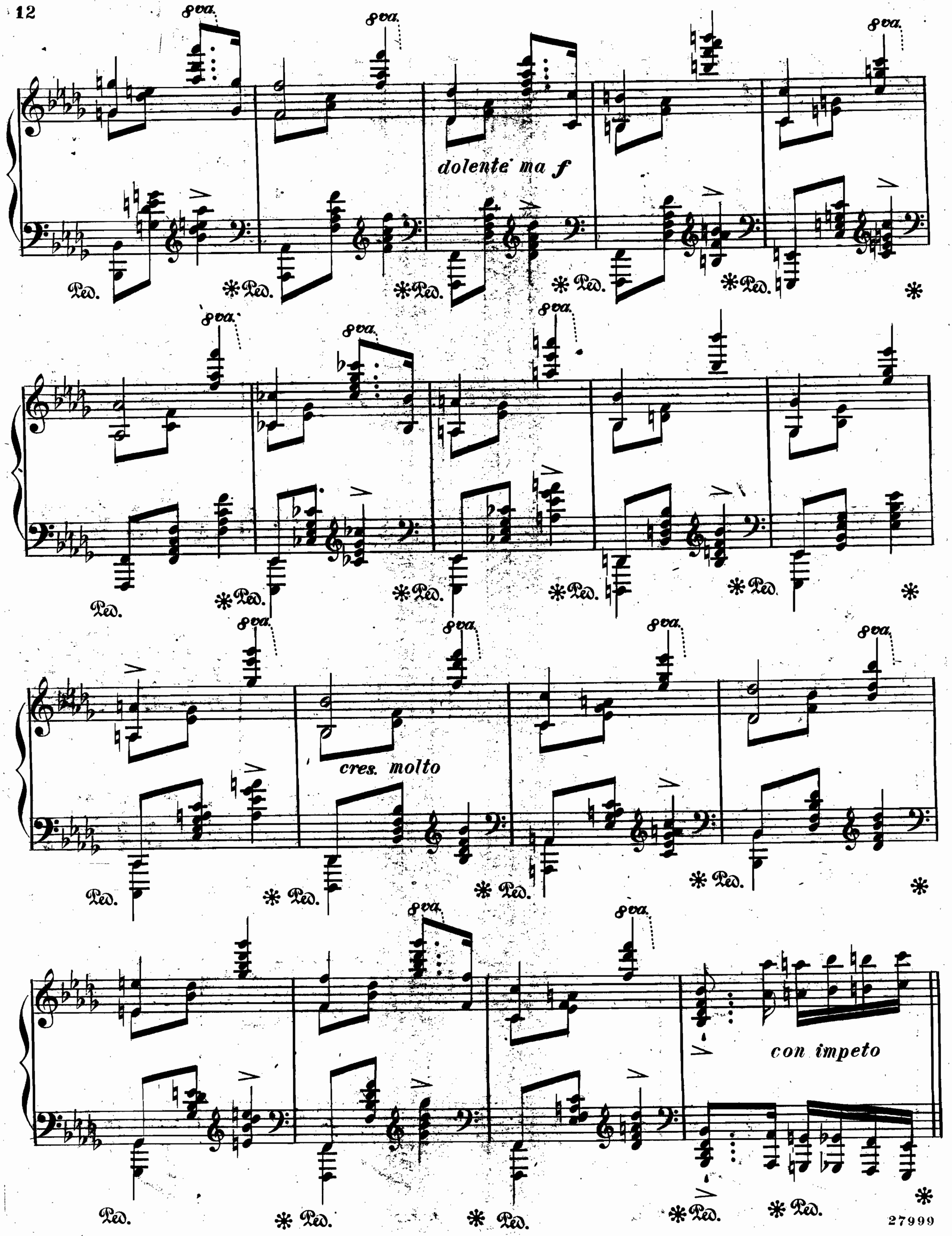

8va
Ped.
con fuoco


8va
Ped.
ff
mf
mesurato
con impeto

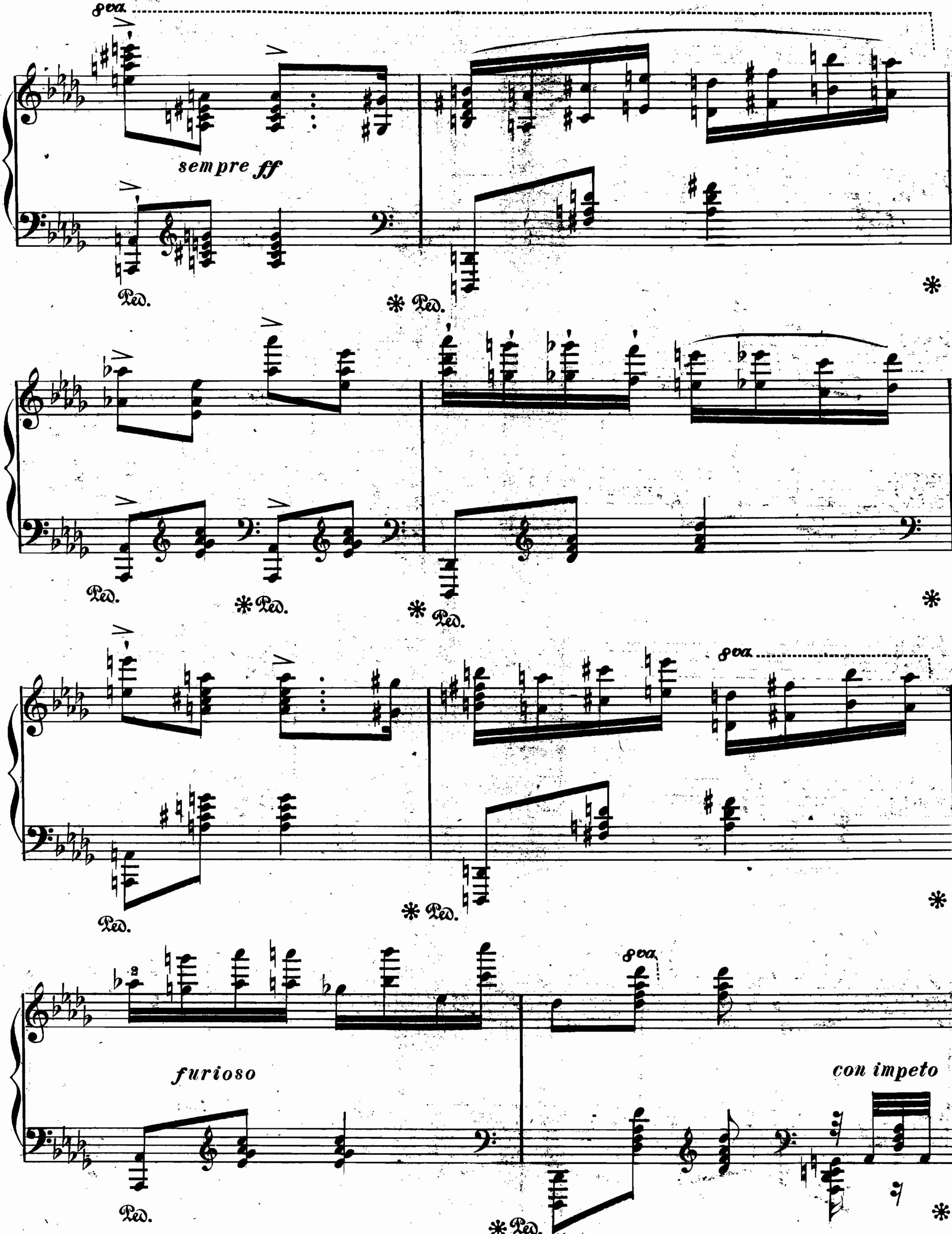

8va
mesurato
ff
con impeto
mesurato
ff
con impeto
8va
mesurato
ff
con impeto
stridente
M.G.
ff
sanz rall.


Meno mosso. (♩= 96.)
ben cantato
mf
M.G.
Ped.


cres.
M.G
M. G.
M.G.
deliso
f
ff
8va
Ped.


8va
dolente ma f
Ped.
cres. molto
con impeto


(♩ = 104.)
Ped.
8va
cres. molto


8va
sempre ff
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
Ped.
8va
Ped.
Ped.
furioso
8va
con impeto
Ped.
Ped.


con impeto
deciso
deciso
deciso
ff con impeto
M.D.
fff
8va
8va
Fine.
fff